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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000857

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT STAFF FOR LTGEN SELVA

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SUBJECT: "OUTPOST" MAOZ ESTHER DISMANTLED, TEN "DELIMITING" ORDERS ISSUED

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Greg Marchese, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary. On May 21, Israeli border police dismantled, for the third time, six caravans at a site north of Ramallah called Maoz Esther by settlers. Settlers immediately began rebuilding the caravans. Settler leadership claimed to be unconcerned by the GOI's decision to dismantle Maoz Esther, but expressed concern about possible upcoming evacuations of West Bank outposts. The Israeli Civil Administration reportedly issued "delimiting" orders against ten outposts on May 25, requiring settlers to leave them voluntarily within seven days. Six of the ten outposts appear on the USG's list of post-March 2001 outposts. End summary.

Outpost Dismantled, Rebuilding Immediately Started

¶12. (C) Binyamin Regional Council Chairman Avi Roeh told Poloff that, on May 21, Israeli border police dismantled, for the third time, six caravans housing eight families and a synagogue at the Maoz Esther "outpost," adjacent to the Kochav HaShachar settlement, north of Ramallah. (Note: Representatives of Israeli NGO Peace Now told Poloff that the families did not primarily reside in the six caravans, which were roughly constructed on site. End note.) Roeh said the settlers began rebuilding the caravans immediately following the evacuation. He had asked the Israeli Ministry of Defense (MOD) to provide him advance notice before dismantling any outposts in his region, and protested the lack of notice on Maoz Esther. He said Ramallah area settlers are "getting nervous" that Defense Minister Barak will dismantle additional settlements in coming weeks, and commented, "this is very bad for me politically."

New "Delimiting" Orders Against Ten Outposts

¶13. (C) Head of Peace Now's Settlement Watch Hagit Ofran told Poloff on May 27 that the repeated dismantlement and rebuilding of Maoz Esther is "insignificant" and "a game that the settlers and the Civil Administration play." Ofran said that, on May 25, the Civil Administration issued "delimiting" orders against ten outposts: Givat Hadegel/Ramat Gilad, Havat Maon, Givat Haroeh, Mitzpe Lachish, Havat Shaked, Yitzhar South, Mitzpe Yitzhar, and Hazon David, Mitzpe Assaf, and Maale Rehavim. According to Ofran, "delimiting" orders prohibit entrance into an area after a seven-day grace period, and are the first step towards evacuation of an outpost. Ofran said six of the ten outposts were issued "delimiting" orders in 2006, and Peace Now unsuccessfully petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice to require implementation of the orders. Ofran said she is hopeful that USG pressure on the GOI will result in implementation of

these new orders. She expressed certainty that the settlers would not voluntarily leave these outposts within seven days.

¶14. (C) Note: The USG list of post-March 2001 outposts counts Havat Shaked and Yitzhar South as the same outpost. The Civil Administration's orders include six outposts on the USG list: Givat Hadegel/Ramat Gilad, Havat Shaked/Yitzhar South, Mitzpe Yitzhar, Mitzpe/Givat Assaf, Maale Rehavim, and Mitzpe Lachish. End note.

Yesha Council Chairman: "We're Really Not Concerned - Yet"

¶15. (C) Yesha Council Chairman Dani Dayan told Poloff on May 27 that, "as long as the MOD only dismantles outposts like Maoz Esther, we're really not concerned - yet." Dayan called it "inconceivable" that the MOD would fail to notify the settler council prior to taking action, and expressed concern about the ten "delimiting" orders, which could indicate more significant outpost evacuations in the coming weeks. Dayan said he and other settler leaders met with Barak on May 20 "to convince him to ease the construction freeze" on West Bank settlements, but Barak did not at that time identify outposts scheduled for evacuation. Dayan expressed surprise that the GOI is "using inflammatory rhetoric, which will prevent a negotiated solution" between the GOI and settler leadership.

MARCHESE